Diteſcendi Regula,

OR,

The Way to Riches,

IN A

SERMON

PREACHED

Upon *Matth.* VI. XXXIII.

Ex quo omnia nobis niſi cujus omnia?
Tert. adv. Marcionem lib. 5.
Cui nos decet obſequi niſi Remuneratori?
Id. lib. 4.

By *Edm. Wood* Vicar of *Sandridge* in *Hertfordſhire.*

LONDON,

Printed by *M. C.* for the Author, 1698.

Barney

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN

Earl of *Marleborough*, &c.

My Good Lord and Patron.

Right Honourable,

THere is a Juſtice due to Virtue whereſoever Seated, and while we ſtrive to ſhun all Adulation of the Great, we ſhould not deprive them of thoſe Honours which are due to their Merits, and which render them truly Honourable and Illuſtrious. Nor ſhould I decline to diſplay to the World thoſe of your Honour which have ſo much adorn'd and bleſs'd it, could I but find Words conformable to my Duteous Sentiments, and the Dignity of the Subject. But leaving that as a Task for ſome more equal Pen, I ſhall only by my Boldneſs declare your Honours Goodneſs,

neſs, whileſt I preſent to your Honour in Teſtimony of my Duty and Gratitude, that which indeed needs your Patronage and Protection; Nor need I doubt, (while I expoſe the following Diſcourſe to the Benefit I hope of ſome, and the Cenſure of all) but that your Honours Moderation ſo well known to all Men, will be auſpicious to the Weak Endeavours of

Your Honours

Moſt Humble and

Moſt Obedient Servant

Edm. Wood.

Matth. VI. XXXIII.

But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you.

OUR Bleſſed Saviour having obſerved how the greater part of Mankind beſtow'd all their endeavours for the obtaining the fading Treaſures of this World, (as the Particle [But] referring to the Context gives Intimation) does from the 19th ver. of this Chapter, dehort them from a too vigorous purſuance of theſe Earthly things, earneſtly perſwading them to employ their time and pains in ſeeking after things above, ſaying, *Lay not up for your ſelves a Treaſure on Earth where the moth and ruſt corrupteth and where Thieves break through and ſteal; but lay up for your ſelves a Treaſure in Heaven where the moth and ruſt corrupteth not, and where Thieves break not through nor ſteal*; nevertheleſs he conſiders that we are Fleſh as well as Spirit, and that our Bodies are to be ſuſtained as well as our Souls, and that Temporal Bleſſings, Meat and Drink and Rayment are neceſſary for us in this Life, Our Father which is in Heaven, he tells us, knows that we have need of theſe things, and that if we truſt to his Providence he will not ſee us want them: Nay, he would have us ſeek after them too, only he puts us in the right Way and Method of obtaining them, and that is by ſeeking firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs (*i. e.*) he adviſes us to be good if we wou'd be happy, and to ſecure to our ſelves the Bleſſings of this life by eſtabliſhing in the firſt place our Eternal

Happineſs in the next: And indeed conſidering the natural Propenſity of Men to gather Riches and Poſſeſſions in this World, there could not certainly have been a more proper and prevailing Argument to move Men to be mindful of Religious Duties than by offering to them ſuch Conſiderations. The greateſt Humane Wiſdom and Travels might perhaps fail of procuring to Men even theſe Temporal Bleſſings, or at leaſt from ſecuring them for fear of looſing; but our Saviour ſhews us an infallible way of obtaining and alſo of preſerving them, *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you.* By the Kingdom of God we may underſtand, either the Kingdom of Grace in this World, that is his ſpecial and gracious Government over, and illumination of Men's hearts, moving them to believe his Promiſes and perform his Will, of which it is ſaid in *Rom.* 14. 17. The Kingdom of God is Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, and in the 17th of St. *Luke* at the 21th verſe. *Behold the Kingdom of God is within* or (as the Original [ἐντὸς ὑμῶν] imports) among *you.* Or elſe the Kingdom of Glory, that is his bleſſed and glorious Eſtate, wherein he Reigns with Myriads of Saints for ever full of Celeſtial Majeſty and Felicity, of which it is ſaid, 1 Cor. 6. 9. *Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God?*

In both theſe Acceptations we are to ſeek and labour for this Kingdom, and therefore for his Righteouſneſs alſo as a Qualification abſolutely neceſſary for the Attainment thereof. It is called [his] Righteouſneſs δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ either for that all good Gifts and Graces proceed from him; or to diſtinguiſh it from that, which Men falſly ſo call,

not

not unprobably reflecting on the *Phariſees*, and ſuch as prided themſelves in their own Righteouſneſs, *Quod autem fulget ante oculos hominum ſordet in conſpectu Dei.* Or to intimate to us, that we ſhould ſtrive after the higheſt degree of Chriſtian Graces; that the Imperfection of our preſent State is capable of, ſince we have for our Copy no leſs than the Righteouſneſs of God himſelf. This word Righteouſneſs being of a comprehenſive ſignification in moſt places of holy Scripture, and doubtleſs is in this, (if at leaſt we may meaſure the extent of the Duty by the Latitude of the Reward annex'd to it) ſo as to denote to us the whole Duty of a Chriſtian, as it relates to God or Man. I ſhall not therefore uſe any more Words of Explication, the Senſe of theſe Words being plain and obvious to each Apprehenſion, and contain in them this following Propoſition or Direction. *Doctrine.*

That Almighty God will by no means ſuffer us *Doct.* to want any of the Neceſſaries of this Life; provided we make them not the utmoſt end of our Deſires and Endeavours, but propound to our ſelves an higher and nobler Object; namely, the Glory of God, and Salvation of our Souls. Or thus,

That if we firſt of all, and chiefly take care to pleaſe God in living according to the Rules he has preſcribed, and that in order to our Happineſs in the next Life, he will aſſuredly give us all things that are neceſſary to ſupport us in this. Which Propoſition of our Saviour's is no other than a Conditional Promiſe. I ſhall therefore in the following Diſcourſe ſpeak.

Firſt, Of the Reaſonableneſs of the Condition contained therein; to make Heavenly Things the firſt and chief Object of our Deſires and Endea-

vours, and conſequently to let this World with the good Things thereof to poſſeſs only a ſecond Place in our Minds; *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs?*

2*dly*, I ſhall endeavour to Illuſtrate and Explain the Truth and Limitation of the Promiſe it ſelf, *and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you:*

3*dly*, Anſwer ſome Objections which may be offered againſt it. And,

4*ly*, Make ſome brief Application from the whole.

Firſt, Then of the Reaſonableneſs of the Condition or Caution, to make Heavenly Things the chief Object of our Deſires and Endeavours. And this I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, not from the infinite Excellencies both of the Quality and Duration of the Heavenly Enjoyments beyond thoſe of this World, in Reference whereto they hold no Degree of Compariſon, but by repreſenting ſome of thoſe Prejudices which corrupt the Judgments of Men, and by which they are commonly alienated from ſeeking after their true and proper Intereſt. That it is Men's Duty to uſe their honeſt Endeavours to get a Competency of the Goods of this World is ſo far from being denyed by the Sacred Scriptures, that the Apoſtle tells us; *That he who provides not for his own, eſpecially thoſe of his own houſe is worſe than an infidel, and has denyed the Faith*; and our Bleſſed Saviour, when he Exhorts us to ſeek the Kingdom of God in the firſt place, does by no means in the ſecond place exclude or diſapprove Men's honeſt endeavours and labour to obtain the neceſſaries of this Life: *He that will not work, let him not eat, ſays the Apoſtle?* Every particular Man (as our Church Catechiſme truly Teaches) ought to Learn and Labour truly to

1 Tim. 5. 8.

2 Theſ. 3. 10.

get

get his own Living in that State of Life unto which it has pleaſed God to call him: All the Danger that our Saviour Cautions of, is leſt we make theſe Earthly Things our principal Care and chief Buſineſs in this World? And really this Caution is but too needful and requiſite if we conſider.

First of all the Inclination and Temper of Mankind, who are by their Nature wonderfully Affected with Temporal and Senſitive Things: The Things of this World bear ſuch a Relation and correſpondency to our Affections, that we are very eagerly carried on to the Enjoyment of them, to inſtance in ſome of the more common and regular deſires of Nature: How does Hunger and Thirſt endear theſe Earthly Bleſſings to us? For the Demonſtration whereof, I need not introduce the Words of our Saviour, when he ſays, *'twas his meat and drink to do the will of his Father*; to intimate to us the delightfulneſs of the Exerciſe; nor need I produce the Authority of *Apollonius Thyanæus*, Diſputing with the Scholars of *Hiarchas*, or Travel as far as *India* for Arguments to evince that the greateſt and moſt natural Affection of Man is to preſerve Life, ſince all Men but the Lunatick or Deſperate evidently own it, and therefore deſire the Means of its Preſervation, as each Day and Hour gives ſufficient Teſtimony; and as a Conſequence of this, it is no wonder if Money too, which is the Root or Procurer of theſe Good, as well as evil Things, be likewiſe highly Valued, and Induſtriouſly ſought for; thus far the Neceſſities of Humane Life, render the Things thereof deſirable, even to the ſoberly minded, but when Men once give Liberty to their Irregular Appetites, how fiercely then do they purſue theſe Earthly

Brown's *Pſeudodox. Epidem.*

ly Things! So impetuouſly then are they carried on to the gratifying all their wild Exceſſes, that nothing can ſatisfie or check their Fury but what deſtroys their Being. I might here deſcend to a particular Survey of the various Propenſities of Mankind, and the different Object of their Minds; but ſeeing the Apoſtle has already Rank'd them under three Heads (*i. e.*) the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, Pleaſure, Riches, or Vain-glory: I ſhall conclude this particular, with reference to the Breaſt of all Men; whether or no theſe things are not the univerſal Object of their Natural and Unreſtrained Appetites. This is the firſt that our Nature Prompts us to the Things of this World.

1 *John* 2. 16.

Secondly, If we conſider the Education and Cuſtomes of Men, theſe very much diſpoſe 'em to the Things and Buſineſs of this World, and to a Negligence and Careleſsneſs in preparing for the next.

If Men's Nature only prompted them to covet and ſeek after theſe Earthly Things, this alone might be thought ſufficient to render them very dear and grateful; but when they have been Trained up, and long Accuſtomed to the Rules and Methods of Acquiring them, and (I may ſay) Adoring them, and that by their Parents or Tutors, whoſe Examples they have too; moreover that it is the Cuſtom of all the World beſides to ſeek after theſe Things with all the Sedulity and Pains imaginable, as if their whole Religion were placed therein, who can wonder if weaker Judgments preſently take up a Fancy that they were Born for no other End? Or whilſt they behold the univerſal Careleſsneſs of others in not laying ſo much as one Stone towards the Building of their Heavenly

venly Habitation, who can think that they ſhou'd ever fix their Minds on Heaven, or go about to ſeek the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, and in the mean time vanquiſh the Powers both of a firſt and ſecond Nature?

Thirdly, The Quality of the Things themſelves do ſo totally poſſeſs the Minds of Men, exacting ſo intire an Intention to them, as will very difficultly admit them Time or Means ſeriouſly to conſider of their Eternal State.

The Things of this World having ſo great an Influence over Mankind, as is ſaid, deal at length by him as *Pharaoh* did by the *Iſraelites*; whenſoever they have any good Motion to ſeek and ſerve the Lord, the World offers new Baits and adds to their former Drudgery that of ſatisfying ſome new Luſt. There is ſuch an Intertexture and Affinity among the Things of this World, that the obtaining of one does but raiſe Men's endeavours for the compaſſing of more, their Succeſs in one Labour expoſing them to a thouſand others: Has a Man obtained a Competency? He then wants Plenty; Has he got that too? Then he wants Superfluity. Nay, when he has fill'd up, and glutted his Avarice (if we may ſo ſpeak of that which is inſatiable) he has but juſt then laid the Foundation, over which Pride and Senſuality are to be the glittering and lofty Superſtructure, which will be ſure to find him Work enough, ſo that he ſhall not be Idle, that is, he ſhall have no leiſure for Divine Employments. Thoſe that are of the pooreſt Rank of all, are commonly very intent upon raiſing their Fortune, and think it their Virtue to omit all other Duties, that they may attend on this alone, and in the mean time very uneaſie,

Curſing

Curſing their Stars and Murmuring againſt Providence; and as ſome ſit down in a lazy and unindustrious Deſpair, others whilſt they reſolutely ſtrive to ſtrike out their own Fortune, are ready to aſcribe the Succeſs to the Work of their own Hands alone, forgetting that God to whom they ſhould firſt of all have made Application, Overrules as well as Overſees all things, and that whatſoever they do, or ſhall enjoy, is wholly owing to the Gracious Fiat of the Divine Goodneſs: I might here Inſtance farther in all the ſeveral Eſtates, Conditions, and Orders of Men, Tradeſmen, Artificers, Husbandmen, Men of all Degrees, Callings, and Perſuaſions, even in pretended Matters of Religion, howſoever otherwiſe differing and diſcordant, do nevertheleſs all of them agree in this particular, and do all concentre in this Point, are all for minding this *hoc Age* for Buying Cheap, and Selling Dear, by any means to advance their Eſtates, and procure the good Things of this World, and to this they are for the moſt part ſo fix'd and rivetted, ſo immoderately obſtinate in the purſuit of that, they cannot bear the leaſt thought of Interruption, or Avocation. For this they will riſe Early, and take late Reſt, and Eat the Bread of Carefulneſs; for this they Sweat and Toyl away their weary Days, and in the Night repeat in Dreams their daily Labours, for this they hazard their Immortal Souls, and that dear Body too, for which they all this while have Labour'd, becoming by degrees Enthuſiaſted to this preſent World, that is to ſay, of ſo Dead a Senſe to all Thoughts of Futurity, that they look upon all thoſe as Fools who go about to reclaim them of their Folly, and who are not led on to the ſame degree

degree of ſtupidity; ſo little minding that Precept of our Saviour, *Seek ye firſt the kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs*; that they then only begin to think of ſeeking to that Kingdom, when they can enjoy this earthly Kingdom with its Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs no longer. So great Reaſon had our Bleſſed Saviour to caution Men, and as it were Article and Indent with them not to ſet their Hearts on theſe low inferior things, becauſe they were thereby ſo likely to be for ever held in Bondage, and almoſt cut off from all hopes of Liberty to ſeek and ſerve the Lord.

Fourthly, A fourth Reaſon which makes the Things of this World ſo deſirable, even to good Men, and which were indeed excuſable, did it not too often raiſe their deſires to exceſs, or put 'em upon Precautions and baſe Methods of procuring them. Is the many Hardſhips and Afflictions, to which the want of theſe things expoſes Men; and hereby I do not mean thoſe Grievances which affect the Body, tho' that too becomes a fellow Sufferer (as I before intimated) but I mean thoſe which to an honeſt and generous mind, are far more inſupportable, that is to ſay, the Contempt, Scandals and Reproach to which Poverty hath been at all times liable. The poor Man, as one truly ſays, *being like an unroofſt Houſe, unfenced and unſheltered from the Guſts of the World, which blow in continually upon him from all Quarters; if he has any good parts in him, they lie dead upon his Hands for want of Employment, and his Virtues are look'd upon as ill placed, and even thoſe that ſay of him he is an honeſt Man, will truſt a Knave before him*; but if any thing like Vice be ſeen in him, as who is free from Error, how ſoon his leaſt ſlip or miſtake is magnified into

Earl's *Microcoſmography*.

the moſt flagitious and capital Crime; nay, oftentimes his very Virtues ſhall be his blemiſh, and by putting a falſe colour on them made the Matter of Calumny and Accuſation; for Men making a Conſcience of loading ſuch a one with the foulest Aſperſions; and many from a falſe way of Philoſophizing, will draw Arguments of Men's Guilt from the very Afflictions which they ſuffer; thus *Job*'s Friends had never took upon them ſo pertly (and in ſhew religiouſly) to upbraid his Vices if they had not ſeen his Calamities, nor could the *Melitæans* think any otherwiſe of St. *Paul*, but that he was ſome notorious Malefactor, (a Murtherer at leaſt) when they ſaw the Viper faſten on his Hand; and 'tis more than probable (becauſe foretold of him by the Prophet *Iſaiah*) that not only our bleſſed Saviour's free and compaſſionate converſe with Publicans and Sinners, but his Poverty too in reſpect of the things of this World, made the *Jews* ſo bold, as contemptuouſly to term him a Wine-bibber and a Glutton, not that they knew any ſuch thing by him, but that it is cuſtomary, eſpecially among vulgar Heads to ſtigmatize without ſcruple, deſpiſed and unarmed Poverty with any ſcandalous, though never ſo unjuſt Imputations, ſuch as being Unjuſt, Unkind, Unfaithful, Undutiful, Uncivil, Unchriſtian, and many other Terms of the ſame Bran, which as they are Burthens very hard to bear, ſo are they likewiſe the Tryals of our Strength, and are to add to our Chriſtian Trophy thoſe Tears and Prayers which are the Weapons of our paſſive Valour. And indeed, if *Solomon* obſerves of Oppreſſion that it makes a wiſe Man mad, he certainly muſt have more than *Solomon*'s Wiſdom, and have Shoulders ſtronger than thoſe

Acts 28. 4.

Eccles. 7. 7.

the

the Poets feigned of *Atlas*, who can always ſtand erect under ſo ponderous a Burthen, and who does not at ſome time or other make Deflections below the Dignity of his Profeſſion or his Nature. Theſe are ſome of thoſe Reaſons I thought fit to mention, which do endear to us the things of this World, and gave occaſion to our Saviour's Admonition in the Text. *Seek ye firſt the kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs.*

I ſhall now proceed to the ſecond thing I propounded, which was to illuſtrate and explain the limitation and truth of the Promiſe it ſelf, *and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you.*

Our Bleſſed Saviour ſeeing all Men, as has been ſaid, very ſtudious of obtaining the bleſſings of this life, does according to that Divine Goodneſs and Wiſdom whereby he uſed to inſtill Spiritual Notions into the minds of Men, by the conſideration of temporal things, moſt excellently convert and improve this their carnal Infirmity, into a good means of inciting them to the knowledge of God, and performance of their Duty; for if they deſired the good things of this World, to whom ſhou'd they more rationally apply themſelves, than to that God who Created them; and from whom every good and perfect Gift comes? He corrects their Errour, and reforms their Judgments, and puts them in the direct and only way to obtain their Ends, not by Robbery and Treachery, Plotting, or falſe Coyning, not by Sharping (as it is called) and Over-reaching our leſs wary, tho' more honeſt Neighbour, amaſſing up *per fas, & ne fas*, by right or wrong, huge heaps of Treaſure which are ſubject both to Ruſt and Robbery; not by flattering our ſelves in the contemplation of our full Barns,

from which in an inſtant we may be ſnatched away, not by over caring, and carking, and laboring, and macerating our ſelves in the purſuit of theſe things, which notwithſtanding all our travel we as often miſs of as obtain, and which do not always prove Bleſſings, but by methods plain, regular, and rational, not only reſulting and deduceable from the Light of Nature, but conſentaneous and approvable to the Will of God, *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you*; do but be and comport your ſelf as every good Chriſtian ſhould; endeavour firſt of all to diſcharge a good Conſcience towards God and your Neighbour, and then as you ſhall not fail of Eternal Happineſs at the end of your Stage, ſo you ſhall want no good thing that is neceſſary for your Entertainment and Refreſhment by the way.

Firſt then, we are here to premiſe, that when our Bleſſed Saviour ſays all theſe things, he does by no means intimate, as though we ſhou'd all paſs our Voyage here with Pomp and Magnificence, with abundance of Wealth and a numerous Equipage. (This being the Portion only of the Kings, Princes, and Nobles of the Earth, whom for their eminent Virtues and Princely Endowments, or other latent cauſes: God out of his inſcrutable Wiſdom thinks fit to raiſe to that Dignity, and who for the moſt part are happier in the Eyes of others than their own) but that we ſhall not want a competent ſupply for all the neceſſities of humane Life. Although,

Serm. on Pſ. 19.11. Secondly, the Practice and Exerciſe of Chriſtian Duties, as the late elegant Archbiſhop *Tillotſon* very truly demonſtrates, do of their own Nature won-

wonderfully conduce to the improvement of our Fortunes and Happineſs in this World, by exciting us to a well governed Diligence and Induſtry in our ſeveral Vocations, by reſtraining in us thoſe Exceſſes and Exorbitancies which naturally tend to Poverty and Want, beſides the particular Bleſſings of God upon thoſe that firſt ſeek unto him and depend upon his Providence.

Thirdly, Wherein the Veracity and Truth of this Promiſe of our Bleſſed Saviour does farther and more fully appear: The Knowledge of God and our Duty teaches us to circumſcribe and bound our Appetites, to proin and lop off the Luxuriancies, to moderate our Affections and Deſires, and to be contented with ſuch a Portion of this Worlds Goods, as God of his Grace ſhall aſſign and diſtribute to each of us; and even the light of Nature will teach us that the happineſs of this life does not conſiſt in the abundance of outward Wealth which a Man poſſeſſeth, but in an inward tranquillity and peace of Mind. *Epicurus* that Wiſe, Temperate and Virtuous Heathen, however injuriouſly traduced by the ignorance or envy of later Ages, has left incomparable documents in his Morals upon this Subject, to the reproach of the generality of Chriſtian Practiſe. He has told us, that the only way to make any one Rich indeed, is not by adding to his Riches, but by detracting from his Deſires; *for thoſe only are truly and properly ſaid to be Rich indeed, to whom Riches are ſuperfluous, that is thoſe who have brought their minds to a due moderation in reſpect of theſe things, which moderation he deſines to be that diſpoſition of mind which makes a Man contented with a little, and that which they can hardly poſſeſs a greater good; this conſidered, ſaith he, let*

D. Charletons *Collections of* Epicurus's *Morals.*

let us endeavour to content our ſelves in our Stations, remembering that not all the Wealth of the World congeſted into one heap can avail in the leaſt meaſure to cure the leaſt diſeaſe or perturbation of the mind; whereas mean Riches as they are the occaſion of no care or other paſſion during life, ſo will it not be grievous to us to part with them, when we think of Death; miſerable truly are the minds of thoſe Men, and their hearts ſurrounded with blindneſs, who ſpend their days in ſcraping together more than ſufficient, and that with ſuch greedineſs, as if they meant to outlive Death, to prevent want in their Graves, or had never bethought themſelves of the uncertainty of Life, and how deadly a Potion we all drink of at our very entrance into the World. what, tho' this meaner degree of Riches do not afford thoſe delights which vulgar minds ſo much love and court? yet Nature does not want 'em, nor does ſhe in the mean time ceaſe to yield great delight in the fruition of meer neceſſaries. The chief Reaſon why Men covet abundance of Riches is commonly to the end they may gratifie their Senſuality, or Ambition, or Luxury, and the like; and he that is without theſe irregular Appetites need not be ſollicitous to procure the means of their Gratification: Thus far *Epicurus* on this Subject, and this even the Light of Nature inſtructed the Wiſer among the Heathen. Now our Chriſtian Religion does conſtantly call upon us to mortifie our inordinate deſires, not faſhioning our ſelves as the Apoſtle ſpeaks 1 *Pet.* 1. 14. according to our former Luſts in our Ignorance, but as he that hath called us is Holy, ſo ought we to be Holy in all manner of Converſation; *Foraſmuch as ye know* (ſaith he) verſe 18. *that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as Silver and Gold from your vain converſation, received*

ved by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Chriſt. And St. *John* to diſcourage us from fixing our hearts too much on theſe tranſient things, tells us in 1 Epiſt. 2. 16, 17. That all that is in this World, the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life; for all their glittering Shew and powerful Attraction, are nevertheleſs not of the Father, but of this preſent World, which in a ſhort time ſhall paſs away, together with the Luſts thereof, when he that does the Will of God ſhall not do ſo, but ſhall abide for ever. And St. *Paul* who had ſo moderated his Appetites, that he knew how to want, and how to abound, and learned in all Conditions to be content, in *Col.* 3. 2. *Exhorts us all to ſet our affections on things above, not on things on the earth,* and at *v.* 5. *Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is idolatry.* And in *Heb.* 13. 5. *Let your converſation be without covetouſneſs, and be content with ſuch things as you have, for he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee nor forſake thee.* It were endleſs to run through all thoſe Texts which teach this temper and moderation of Mind, and Retrenchment of our carnal Appetites; By what has been ſaid, you may perceive, that not only natural Reaſon, but ſupernatural Wiſdom enjoyns the ſame thing, and which therefore ſurely ought to have the greater Influence upon us, becauſe we are thereby, not only working out a temporal and ſenſitive Reward, but aſpiring to a far more tranſcendent and durable Recompence in the Kingdom of God.

Phil. 4. 11. 12. 1 *Tim* 6. 8.

But here in the third place to this Diſcourſe it may be yet objected; that although a mean For- *Obj.*

tune

tune may very well conſiſt with the happineſs of humane Life, and be agreeable to that Promiſe of our Saviour, *that all theſe things ſhall be added unto us*: yet how can thoſe poor Souls be ſaid to be partakers of this Promiſe, who altho' perſons truly fearing God, and ſeeking him above all things, are nevertheleſs ſunk down into the very loweſt degree of Poverty, with all its melancholy Concomitants aforementioned: And have we not known, or read, or heard of many good Chriſtians who have periſhed for want of theſe things?

As this Objection is twofold, I ſhall endeavour to give a twofold Anſwer.

Firſt, As to the low Eſtate we ſee many good Men labour under, we are to remember that God ſometimes ſuffers his dear Children to undergo Extremities and Hardſhips, that he may reward their Patience, Faith, and Conſtancy, by this means proved with all manner of outward Bleſſings afterward. For this Promiſe (as all others) is in the Future Tence, *all theſe things (ſhall be added)* that is to ſay, not perhaps immediately, but in ſuch due time hereafter, as God in whoſe hand are the Times and Seaſons, ſhall eſteem moſt fit and proper for us; of this we have ſeveral Inſtances in the Holy Scriptures. *Joſeph* was to be the moſt Potent and wealthy Subject among the *Egyptians*, but firſt he was to be betrayed by his Brethren, and ſold for a Slave, and though Innocent, to undergo an hard Captivity with Malefactors. So *Job* was to abound in his latter Days with all manner of Wealth and Honour, but he was firſt to be deprived of all things that he had, except his Life, and for which alone Men commonly think their Lives deſirable; not to mention *David* and others, who through

through many Difficulties and Afflictions have arrived to eminent Wealth and Dignity, it being the uſual Method of the Divine Providence to exalt them that have been humbled, to raiſe them out of their Duſt, and to advance them to ſuch a degree of Proſperity, as may vindicate its Care, and ſignalize its Goodneſs, and inſtruct Mankind, that the patient abiding of the Meek ſhall not always be forgotten, for though as the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *Pſa.* 126. v. *ult. Though the righteous may go forth for a while and weep, yet if they do but bear the precious ſeed, they ſhall doubtleſs come again with rejoycing, and not only ſo, but they ſhall bring their ſheaves with them.*

Secondly, That ſome periſh for want of theſe things.

Altho' the number of ſuch has been very few, and on the other hand, multitudes of Inſtances may be brought of ſuch, who in their greateſt Extremities have been miraculouſly relieved and ſupported, as *Daniel*, *Elijah*, the Widow of *Zarephath*. The whole Nation of *Iſrael* in their long Peregrination through the Wilderneſs, towards the promiſed Land (a true Emblem of our Pilgrimage here towards our heavenly Country) and thoſe many thouſands whom our Saviour fed with a ſmall quantity of Bread and Fiſhes. Yet granting that ſome have periſhed for want of theſe things; the Pious and Learned Doctor *Taylor* gives no other than this round Anſwer: Then that's the Diſeaſe they are to die of; nevertheleſs, to be ſomewhat more particular; this deplorable and fatal Caſe has only happened: Firſt, to ſuch Perſons who have fallen into the Hands of barbarous and cruel Ty-

Dr. Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying of Contentedneſs.*

rants, and then this kind of Death can no more be ſaid to contradict this Promiſe of our Saviour, then if they had ended their days by the Hand of the Executioner; and we know it was not only the Lot and Portion, but the Crown and Glory too of many good Chriſtians to lay down their Lives for the Faith received, and to follow the Example of their Maſter Chriſt Jeſus, *who for the joy that was* Heb. 12. 2. *ſet before him endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the Throne of God.*

Secondly, From ſome calamitous Occurrences of humane Life, from which neither the Good nor Evil are exempted, ſuch as being becalmed at Sea till Proviſions are waſted, or caſt upon ſome deſolate and inhoſpitable Shore, or the like; all which Intrench not in the leaſt upon the Veracity of our Saviour's Promiſe, who has ſhewed us in the general the moſt prudent and effectual way to arrive at a confirmed Eſtate of Happineſs, not engaging that we ſhall be invulnerable to all the blows of Adverſity (which our own Paſſions or Follies may perhaps have drawn upon us, for all that have the Innocency of the Dove have not the Serpents Wiſdom) or exempted from thoſe promiſcuous Caſualties, to which our humane Nature is in this Life ſubject. And here though I might ſhew how theſe words of our Saviour might be Interpreted with ſome allowance, *cum grano ſalis* (as they ſay) as divers other places of Holy Scripture; as for Inſtance, when he asks if the Muſtard-ſeed be not the leaſt amongſt the Seeds? Which altho' we cannot affirm to be the leaſt, yet being very ſmall, he ſo calls it for the better Illuſtration of the matter he was ſpeaking of; and again, whereas it is ſaid,

Heb.

Heb. 9. 27. It is appointed for all men once to die, yet we know that ſome have not died but been tranſlated, as thoſe ſhall be transformed who remain living at the end of the World, nevertheleſs we cannot but acknowledge this to be a true and firm Decree, inaſmuch as Death, or ſomething of the ſame transforming quality muſt inevitably paſs o'er all Men; ſo that I ſay by the like Interpretation of this Promiſe extended to the generality of Men only, with Exception of ſome few particular Perſons, the Truth thereof would nevertheleſs plainly and evidently appear; yet doubtleſs our Saviour meant farther, and we may pronounce more poſitively and comprehenſively, that every individual good Man is included therein, and a partaker thereof; for all thoſe which truly fear God, and ſeek him above all things, cannot properly be ſaid in the greateſt of their Adverſities and Indigencies, really to want any of the Goods of this World, having the abſence of thoſe infinitely ſupplyed to them by the more immediate Preſence of God, who is the very Fountain and Treaſure of all good things, and by the full aſſurance of a ſpeedy Paſſage into unſpeakable and everlaſting Happineſs. So that they may well take up thoſe conſolatory Words of the Great Apoſtle, *we are troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; we are perplexed, but not in deſpair; perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed, for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen, for the things which are ſeen are temporal, but the things which are not ſeen are eternal.* And thus

2 Cor. 4. 8. 9. v. 17. 18.

I have done with the three things I propounded to ſpeak too; I ſhall now proceed in the

Fourth place, to make ſome brief Application of what has been ſaid, and conclude. And firſt, *If ſeeking the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs*; if preparing our ſelves for an happy Eſtate in the Life to come, be the ready way, not only to future, but preſent Happineſs; if we may improve and ſweeten to our ſelves our Condition, here, upon Condition we chiefly and primarily intend and provide for our Felicity hereafter; This ſhould be a great Motive, even to the moſt earthly Complexion and groſſeſt Capacity, to apply themſelves to God and their Duty, if for no other Reaſon, yet for the advancing their Fortune, and mending their Eſtates, for even the ſecular Advantages of Religion and Virtue are ſufficient Inducements to their Practice, were there no other Rewards to be expected hereafter. But then,

Secondly, Let us beware of Hypocriſie, for Religion is a thing ſo wonderfully promotive of our Temporal Intereſt, that the very Counterfeit of it is ſerviceable to that end. This made the *Phariſees* enlarge their Philacterys, and lengthen their Prayers, and took care to ſhew their Devotion in ſome ſuch convenient corners of the Streets, as they might not fail of being popular, and obſerved of Men (as our Saviour ſpeaks) that ſo under this ſpecious ſhew of ſingular Zeal and Piety, they might the more ſecurely and commodiouſly indulge their private Luſts, and purſue their earthly Ends, and enlarge their own Poſſeſſions, tho' by purloyning from helpleſs Widows, and defenceleſs Orphans. Let us beware therefore of all diſſem-

ſembling in Religion; for notwithſtanding all the Temporal Advantages we may gain thereby, they will ſurely prove Curſes to us in the end, and not Bleſſings; for tho' our Bleſſed Saviour in the former part of this Chapter has often repeated, that ſuch Men have their Reward, yet that this Reward of theirs is to be a Judgment, the Reward of Hypocriſie, and not a Bleſſing, appears from what he ſays in the firſt Verſe thereof, *that they ſhall have no reward of our Father which is in Heaven*, and in the 23d Chapter of St. *Matthew*, *after having at large delineated the Larved ſanctity of the Scribes and Phariſees, together with their pernicious practices, and pronounced many a woe againſt 'em for the ſame, concludes his Commination at the* 33d *verſe*, in theſe words, *ye ſerpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye eſcape the damnation of hell?* Mat. 6. v. 1.

Thirdly, We may from hence learn to make a due Eſtimate of the things of this World, to look upon them as the Bleſſings of God, and receive them with Thankſgiving, but not ſo to over-value them, as may in the leaſt diminiſh our Zeal and Affections towards Heavenly things. And indeed, would Men but ſeriouſly endeavour to looſen and diſprejudice their Minds, and thereby diſpoſe themſelves to take a ſober and judicious proſpect of things, the tranſcendent Graces, and glorious Rewards of Chriſtianity would make ſuch Raviſhing and ſtrong Impreſſions on them, that theſe earthly Enjoyments would poſſeſs but a narrow ſhare of their Affections, and it would be an harder matter to make ſuch a one in love with the World, then it is now to perſuade others to renounce it; and this Temper and Indifferency towards Earthly things,

things would influence and regulate their whole Converſation, and would eaſily induce them to follow that ſound Advice of the Learned Biſhop *Saunderſon*; that whileſt they are diligent and induſtrious in their particular Callings of this Life, they ſhould by no means neglect or forget their chief and general Call to a better.

Fourthly, This will adminiſter great comfort to the poor and diſtreſſed Servants of God; to be aſſured upon good grounds, no leſs than the word of God himſelf and the Examples of all Ages, that the Righteous ſhall not be forſaken; that they ſhall never want the neceſſaries of this Life; and that whenſoever theſe things ſhall ceaſe, they ſhall enter upon Joys unſpeakable and be Crown'd with everlaſting Glory: This conſideration will ſteel their Fortitude and confirm their Patience, and keep their Minds erect under the moſt preſſing Adverſities of Humane Life.

Fifthly, The Fifth Lecture we may learn from hence is that of Charity to our diſtreſſed Brethren, we ſhould be free of our help and ſparing of our Cenſures, we ſhou'd give that it may be given unto us; but we muſt not judge that ſo we our ſelves may not be judged. And that ſeeing many Righteous Perſons may be for a while Sufferers in this World, we ſhou'd contribute what we can to their Relief and Comfort; for by this means we ſhall not only do what becomes our Chriſtian Profeſſion, and diſcharge one great Duty of it, but we ſhall have the Honour to be Almoners to Almighty God, and Vindicators of the Divine Veracity, when we are Inſtrumental of fulfilling his Promiſes to thoſe that ſeek him.

Sixthly

Sixthly and *Laſtly*, Seeing the many Infirmities and Weaknesſes with which we are encompaſſed, and which are ready to deliver us up to the Tyranny of our depraved Appetites; we ſhou'd therefore frequently ſeek unto God by humble and devout Prayer, without whoſe Powerful and Gracious Manuduction, all our endeavours of ſeeking his Kingdom and his Righteouſneſs will be fruitleſs and ineffectual; We muſt ſeek God therefore if we would ſeek his Kingdom, which if we ſincerely do, he will not only conduct us to eternal Felicity hereafter, but will cauſe theſe Temporal Bleſſings to be added unto us; For the attainment whereof, let us humbly beſeech Almighty God to qualifie, diſpoſe, and ſanctifie our hearts by the Operation of his Holy Spirit, for the ſake of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord. To whom be aſcribed all Honour, Glory, Praiſe and Thankſgiving henceforth and for ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.